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Summary and Comment

[12](#). (SBU) Five presidential candidates and 21 political parties will stand in presidential and parliamentary elections on December 1 2, the third in Mozambique's history. The ruling FRELIMO and RENAMO remain the leading parties, though two small parties may take some support from them. Campaigning, which began October 17, has proceeded relatively calmly, with fewer and less violent incidents than in previous campaigns. Media coverage has also been more balanced, with RENAMO presidential candidate Afonso Dhlakama and others receiving significant coverage even in state-run media. Despite the continuing disagreement between the EU and the elections commission over observer access (septel), this year's elections may be calmer and better organized than the two previous Presidential elections.
End Summary and Comment.

Presidential Candidates: And Then There Were Five...

[13](#). (U) The Constitutional Council accepted five of the eight presidential nominations for the December 1 - 2 presidential elections. The five candidates are Armando Guebuza, FRELIMO (the ruling party); Afonso Dhlakama, RENAMO; Raul Domingos, Party for Peace, Development and Democracy (PDD); Carlos Reis, Mozambique National Union (UNAMO); and Yaquib Sibindy, Independent Party of Mozambique (PIMO). Three candidates were rejected because they did not present the required 10,000 valid supporting signatures from registered voters. The three were Neves Serrano, Progressive Liberal Party of Mozambique (PPLM); Joaquim Nhota, Democratic Liberal Party of Mozambique (PADELIMO); and Jose Massinga, National Democratic Party (PANADE). None of the three had been expected to have any effect on the election.

[14](#). (SBU) The two main candidates, Armando Guebuza of FRELIMO and Afonso Dhlakama of RENAMO, both are under pressure to win. FRELIMO liberated the country from the Portuguese and has ruled since independence in 1975, and some Mozambicans continue to see little distinction between the party and the government. As a result, a loss by Guebuza, who has less personal popularity than eighteen-year President Joaquim Chissano but has been campaigning for months, would be an historic defeat. If Dhlakama loses for the third consecutive time, RENAMO members could demand that he resign as leader of the party, which he has led since it was a guerrilla group fighting the FRELIMO government in the sixteen-year civil war.

[15](#). (SBU) The two main candidates also face a potential loss of votes to small party candidates. Following gains made during the 2003 municipal elections, PIMO candidate Yaquib Sibindy could take votes from FRELIMO in the predominantly Muslim areas of Nampula, Cabo Delgado and Zambezia. PDD's Raul Domingos, a longtime RENAMO stalwart who was the party's negotiator in the 1992 peace accords, may walk away with RENAMO votes among the central provinces of Sofala, Manica, Tete and Zambezia, where his Sena tribe is strong. Carlos Reis has attracted less support and has so far limited his campaigning to Zambezia. (Nampula and Zambezia are the country's most populous provinces, combining for almost 40 percent of registered voters. Maputo city and Maputo province together have less than 12 percent.) In theory, if Guebuza and Dhlakama receive almost equal support, the other candidates could get enough so that neither receives 50 percent, forcing a runoff. There has been little discussion of and no preparations for this possibility, however.

Lists Finalized for Parliamentary Elections

16. (U) Voters will have to choose among a long list of parties in the parliamentary elections, as 21 political parties and coalitions have met the conditions to stand. All 250 parliamentary seats are at stake in the December general elections; 248 in Mozambique and two in the emigrant constituencies of Africa and Europe. This resulted from the decision of the National Elections Commission (CNE) to register voters in Africa and Europe for the first time and allow them to vote for presidential candidates and elect legislators. In 1999, the 250 seats were split 133 for FRELIMO, which received 48.88 percent of vote, to 117 for RENAMO, which received 38.55 percent of the vote.

17. (U) The number of parliamentary seats gained by each party is based on the proportion of votes won in each province. For example, if FRELIMO wins 50 percent of the vote in Nampula, which has 50 seats available, the party will gain 25 seats in parliament. A party or coalition must win at least 5 percent of the national vote in order to gain a seat; if it does not, its votes are not counted in the proportional allocation of seats in each province. The Democratic Union of Mozambique (UDEMO) took 5 percent of the vote and 9 seats in 1994, while no single small party gained the 5 percent need to win a seat in 1999. The PDD and PIMO won individual seats in five municipal assemblies in the November 2003 municipal elections and stand the best chance of the small parties of winning Assembly seats.

18. (SBU) On October 22, the CNE confirmed that presidential candidates may also stand for seats in parliament. RENAMO party members had challenged the validity of the candidacies of Raul Domingos (PDD), Yaqub Sibindy (PIMO) and Carlos Reis (PANADE) because the three were also standing in the parliamentary election. The CNE confirmed, however, that though the law prohibits a person from serving as both President and a member of parliament, there is no ban on standing for both posts and choosing one if needed. Although yet to be put in practice, it has long been assumed that losing presidential candidates could serve in parliament. Dhlakama has not done this in any of his three presidential bids, though some argue that his status would be enhanced if he were head of the opposition bench in parliament.

19. (SBU) There were some noteworthy developments in the official delegate lists released on October 14. Prime Minister Luisa Diogo heads the FRELIMO delegate list in Zambezia province and current Minister of Transportation Tomaz Augusto Salomo heads the list in Manica province. (This does not mean that they are not candidates for ministerial positions if Guebuza wins, as those chosen as ministers have the option of resigning their parliamentary seats.) On the RENAMO side, outspoken senior RENAMO member Rahil Khan was left off the delegate list in Maputo to make room for new director of the RENAMO election office, Eduardo Namburete, described by many as an up-and-comer within the Renamo ranks. Since being named to office in July 2004, Namburete has accompanied and advised Dhlakama on the campaign trail and is believed to be behind RENAMO's apparent change in campaign tactics away from belittling FRELIMO. Unlike in past campaigns, this year Dhlakama has avoided direct criticism of FRELIMO and instead has focused what he intends to do as president. Another new face on the RENAMO list is Dr. Manuel Araujo, a British-trained political scientist.

Relative Peace on the Campaign Trail

110. (U) Official campaigning by political parties and presidential candidates began on October 17 and will run through November 28. There have been some reports of political intimidation and minor violence, mostly rock-throwing, between opposing parties in hotspots like Nampula and Tete. One of the more serious incidents occurred on Ilha de Mocambique, off the coast in Nampula, where FRELIMO members reportedly attacked the home of RENAMO Mayor Gulamo Mamudo. (Note: Ilha was one of the five mayorships RENAMO won in the 2003 municipal elections. End note.) There was one fatal shooting that may have had a political aspect, but the circumstances were not clear, and neither party has made it a campaign issue. Nevertheless, overall the campaign appears to be running smoothly, with significantly fewer and less violent incidents than in previous years.

111. (U) Both main contenders in the presidential race, Guebuza and Dhlakama, have been active campaigners, visiting cities throughout the country and campaigning in potentially hostile terrain. Guebuza recently went to Dhlakama's home province of Sofala, while Dhlakama toured the southern city of Matola, a FRELIMO stronghold. Guebuza promises to fight absolute poverty and corruption, while rebuilding Mozambique's industrial and economic infrastructure. Dhlakama often claims in his speeches that he will build a genuine rule of law in Mozambique by truly separating the state from the ruling party. The PDD's Domingos is pledging dozens of changes to state services, making education reform his top priority. PIMO's campaign platform has focused on

the need to promote moral values, while UNAMO seeks to address the development asymmetry between north and south through the establishment of a federal system of government.

Media Coverage More Balanced

¶12. (SBU) Press coverage of this year's election campaign has proved more balanced than in past elections. The public television station TVM, traditionally FRELIMO-biased, has been giving Dhlakama and other opposition parties significantly more - though still not equal - coverage than in previous campaigns. A Dhlakama statement espousing the need to separate the party from the state, which likely would not have reached the television public in the past, was recently aired on TVM, and TVM has aired several interviews with a PDD political commission member. Many attribute TVM's new tone to the public uproar that followed its decision not to broadcast a paid advertisement for a book that offered a version of the struggle for independence that differed from FRELIMO's version. TVM staff have privately conceded that the order not to broadcast the advertisement came from the FRELIMO Central Committee. (Note: Several senior journalists and editors from pro-government outlets like "Noticias," TVM, AIM, and "Domingo" are said to be members of the FRELIMO Electoral Campaign Office. End note.) The private television station STV, which was not operating during the 1999 campaign, has provided balanced coverage of the main parties. In both 1999 general elections and the 2003 municipal elections, public-owned Radio Mozambique was praised for its balanced reporting. Its coverage of the 2004 electoral campaign continues to be objective, and it and TVM provide the range of political parties access for party messages to voters.

¶13. (SBU) Despite the headway, some issues remain. Both sides of the equation - journalists and political parties -- have lodged complaints about access to candidates and media outlets, respectively. The privately-owned weekly "Zambeze," which tends to be relatively objective and balanced in its reporting, recently complained that Guebuza's campaign officials refused to "embed" one of its reporters in a campaign delegation, citing logistical limitations.

Comment

¶14. (SBU) Allegations of fraud are a fixture in Mozambique's electoral history, and the continuing dispute between the CNE and the EU over observer access to vote tabulation (septel) is reason for concern. However, with the campaign running relatively peacefully, a new electoral law in place (ref C), and increased experience in electoral administration, these elections may be calmer and better organized than those of 1994 and 1999. End comment.

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